

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Daniel T. arap Moi of Kenya
and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and an Exchange With
Reporters
December 5, 2002

President Bush. Here's what we're going to do. I'm going to welcome our friends to the Cabinet Room in the White House. Each leader will make a statement. We'll then have one question from an American, one question from a Kenyan, and one question from an Ethiopian. The President and the Prime Minister will decide who gets the questions, as will I.

First, it's an honor to welcome President Moi and Prime Minister Meles to the—this is where we do our work, the Cabinet Room. We welcome two strong friends of America here, two leaders of countries which have joined us in the—to fight the global war on terror, two steadfast allies, two people that the American people can count on when it comes to winning the first war of the 21st century. And I'm so pleased that the President and the Prime Minister have agreed to come and have a substantive visit. I thank their delegations for coming with them, and I look forward to a good and open discussion about how we can advance our respective interests.

So Mr. President, welcome. President Moi is a strong leader of Kenya. He is leading the country to a transition period through open elections. And Mr. President, you have distinguished yourself by your service to your country, and I appreciate that, and we welcome you.

President Moi. Thank you very much indeed. I'm delighted to have my last visit to the United States as President of the Republic of Kenya. We are—I am here to discuss a wide range of issues. The most important issue is the security within the Horn of Africa and particularly my own country, Kenya.

These are important issues which will enable us to handle and manage terrorism

in that part of the world. And so I am delighted to be in Washington today.

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you. And of course, I want to reiterate what I have said before, and that is, our country mourns the loss of life in Kenya, the tragedy that befell your country as a result of killers trying to terrorize freedom-loving people. And I appreciate your leadership on that issue.

Mr. Prime Minister, I'm so honored that you're here. Welcome.

Prime Minister Meles. Thank you, Mr. President. We are all here very glad that we've been welcomed to Washington. A moment ago you said that we are engaged in the first war of the 21st century. We believe that the war against terrorism is a war against people who have not caught up with the 21st century, who have values and ideals that are contrary to the values of the 21st century. And in that context, it's a fight not between the United States and some groups; it's a fight between those who want to catch up with the 21st century and those who want to remain where they are.

So I want to assure you that we are all with you against forces of terror and—[inaudible]—and I appreciate your support and leadership. Thank you very much for welcoming us—

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

We'll have one question from each side here. Jackson [David Jackson, Dallas Morning News].

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's Decision To Disarm

Q. Mr. President, I've been out in the country on vacation, and a lot of people have asked me, "What are the chances that

we're actually going to war with Iraq?" I mean, how likely is war, and what would trigger it?

President Bush. Right. That's the question that you should ask to Saddam Hussein. [Laughter] It's his choice to make. And Saddam Hussein must disarm. The international community has come together through the United Nations Security Council and voted 15 to nothing for Saddam Hussein to disarm. We recently got back from NATO, where our NATO Allies voted overwhelmingly to send the same message.

So David, to answer your question, the question is whether or not he chooses to disarm, and we hope he does. For the sake of peace, he must disarm.

There are inspectors inside the country now, and the inspectors are there not to play a game of hide-and-seek, but they're there to verify whether or not Mr. Saddam Hussein is going to disarm. And we hope he does.

Q. But at what point would you make that decision?

President Bush. We hope he does. You'll see.

Mr. President, would you care to call from somebody from the Kenyan press? You don't have to if you don't want to. [Laughter] I thought it would be hospitable.

Q. I'm here from Ethiopia.

President Bush. Well, we'll get you next, sir. [Laughter] Is the Kenyan reporter here? Oh, there.

War on Terror/U.S. Assistance to Kenya and Ethiopia

Q. I would like to know, since Kenya has been a victim of terrorism, what has the U.S. Government put into place, what measures have you put into place to assist Kenya—

President Bush. Yes. Well, that's what we're going to talk about, of course. And part of the reason the President has come is to discuss ways that we can continue

our aid program and continue our work together.

The other thing we must remember is that the war on terror is global in nature and that if the terrorists could strike in Kenya, they could strike in Ethiopia; they could strike in Europe; and that we must continue this war, to hunt these killers down one at a time, to bring them to justice, which means information sharing. We're pleased with the information sharing we're getting from our allies here. It means cutting off the money, and it means bringing to justice—like the Kenyan authorities will be doing to those who kill and take innocent life.

Would you care to call on somebody from your press corps?

Q. I'm going to repeat the same question the Kenyan reporter asked of you. What could be exactly the role of the United States in assisting those African countries, particularly who are the victims of terrorism?

President Bush. Yes. Well, information sharing, for example—we've got a good intelligence-gathering network, made stronger by the fact that we share information between countries. But if we get wind that somebody is thinking about doing something to Ethiopia, we're prepared to work with the Ethiopian Government to disrupt any plans.

The best thing we can do to help secure your countries is to chase the killers down, and we're making good progress. Slowly but surely, we're dismantling an Al Qaida network. And that inures to the benefit of all the countries of the world.

We, of course, will be talking to—about issues such as drought as well. We'll be talking about other issues, economic vitality. I'll be thanking these leaders for their work in bringing stability and peace to their part of the continent of Africa. These are leaders; these are men who have stepped forward and have shown vision and leadership, and we're grateful for that.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released

a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the Celebration of Eid al-Fitr *December 5, 2002*

Thank you very much, sir. It's good to be with you again. And it is my honor to visit the Islamic Center of Washington once again.

For half a century, this beautiful mosque has served as a place of worship for Muslims and has helped to advance understanding between people of different faiths. Millions of our fellow Americans practice the Muslim faith. They lead lives of honesty and justice and compassion.

I am pleased to join you today in the celebration of Eid, the culmination of the holy month of Ramadan. I appreciate so very much Dr. Khouj, and I want to thank the other distinguished imams from the Washington, DC, area. Thank you all for being here. And I enjoyed our visit. I also appreciate the Muslim schoolchildren who are here, telling me stories and reading poems and showing me artwork. Please tell them thanks again for their hospitality.

Islam traces its origins back to God's call on Abraham. And Ramadan commemorates the revelation of God's word in the Holy Koran to the prophet Muhammad, a word that is read and recited with special attention and reverence by Muslims during this season.

Over the past month, Muslims have fasted, taking no food or water during daylight hours, in order to refocus their minds on faith and redirect their hearts to charity. Muslims worldwide have stretched out a hand of mercy to those in need. Charity tables, at which the poor can break their fast, line the streets of cities and towns. And gifts of food and clothing and money are distributed to ensure that all share in

God's abundance. Muslims often invite members of other families to their evening iftaar meals, demonstrating a spirit of tolerance.

During Eid al-Fitr, Muslims celebrate the completion of their fast and the blessings of renewed faith that have come with it. Customs vary between countries, from illuminating lanterns in Egypt to lighting firecrackers in Pakistan, to inviting elders to traditional feasts in Niger. Around the world, families and neighbors and friends gather to share traditional foods and congratulate each other on meeting the test of Ramadan.

The spirit behind this holiday is a reminder that Islam brings hope and comfort to more than a billion people worldwide. Islam affirms God's justice and insists on man's moral responsibility. This holiday is also an occasion to remember that Islam gave birth to a rich civilization of learning that has benefited mankind.

Here in the United States, our Muslim citizens are making many contributions in business, science and law, medicine and education, and in other fields. Muslim members of our Armed Forces and of my administration are serving their fellow Americans with distinction, upholding our Nation's ideals of liberty and justice in a world at peace. And in our Nation's Capital, this center contributes greatly to our spiritual and cultural life.

On behalf of Laura and our family and the American people, I bring our best wishes to all who worship here and to Muslims throughout the world for a joyous Eid and